

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06
TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01
FEAE-00 INT-05 AGRE-00 CU-04 STR-05 DODE-00 PA-01
PRS-01 AF-10 /091 W
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P 271220Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8744
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY VALETTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 7728

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY
SUBJ: TUNISIAN-LIBYAN HIGH COMMISSION JOINT COMMUNIQUE RE-
AFFIRMS WILL TO INCREASE BILATERAL COOPERATION BUT CONTAINS
NO SURPRISES

1. SUMMARY. AT CLOSE OF THIRD MEETING OF JOINT TUNISIAN-
LIBYAN HIGH COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 25, HEADS OF TWO DELEGATIONS,
TUNISIAN PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA AND PRESIDENT OF LIBYAN PEOPLES
GENERAL COMMITTEE LABIDI SIGNED JOINT COMMUNIQUE WHICH RE-
AFFIRMS WILL OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO "INTENSIFY PROSPECTS FOR
COOPERATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. COMMUNI-
QUE APPEARS LARGELY TO BE COMPILATION OF PREVIOUS BOILERPLATE
STATEMENTS CONCERNING INCREASE OF COOPERATION IN VARIOUS SECTORS
AND IT CONTAINS NOTHING THAT IS NOT ALREADY ON PUBLIC RECORD.
COMMUNIQUE NOTES AGREEMENT TO HOLD NEXT HIGH COMMISSION IN
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TRIPOLI IN APRIL 1978. END SUMMARY.

2. JOINT COMMUNIQUE APPEARS TO BE HIGHLY SANITIZED RESUME
OF DISCUSSIONS OVER FOUR-DAY PERIOD OCT 22-25, AND AS USUAL
IN SUCH PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, IT CONTAINS PRECIOUS LITTLE IN WAY
OF SPECIFICS. IT DOES, NATURALLY, REAFFIRM CLAIMS THAT MEETINGS
WERE SUCCESSFUL AND THAT BOTH PARTIES REMAIN COMMITTED TO

"STRENGTHENING BILATERAL RELATIONS AND TO DEVELOPING AND CONSOLIDATING FRATERNAL TIES BETWEEN TWO BROTHER COUNTRIES IN VARIOUS FIELDS." A GOODLY PORTION OF DOCUMENT IS DEVOTED TO UNSPECIFIED DIRECTIVES ISSUED DECEMBER 1972 AT MEETING IN TUNIS BETWEEN PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND COL. QADHAFI (WHEN HIGH COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED AND AT FIRST AND SECOND HIGH COMMISSION MEETINGS IN 1973 AND TO SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS, ALL OF WHICH WERE SUPPOSEDLY THE BASIS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRESENT MEETING).

3. COMMUNIQUE STATES THAT "HIGH COMMISSION EXAMINED WORK OF SUBCOMMISSIONS AND NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THE RESUMPTION OF JOINT ACTION AIMED AT ACHIEVING COOPERATION AND COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN TWO BROTHER COUNTRIES IN VARIOUS FIELDS. IT FURTHER EXPRESSED THE WILL OF TWO PARTIES TO BROADEN AND INTENSIFY PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION IN "INTERESTS OF TWO PEOPLES." COMMUNIQUE ALSO NOTES THAT TWO DELEGATION LEADERS SIGNED MINUTES OF MEETING WHICH OUTLINE PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION IN FOLLOWING AREAS:

- DIVERSIFICATION AND INTENSIFICATION OF TRADE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF STRUCTURES APPROPRIATE TO ACHIEVE THIS END.
- COORDINATION OF TWO COUNTRIES' DEVELOPMENT PLANS WITH OBJECTIVE TO ENSURE SPECIALIZATION AND COMPLEMENTARITY AND TO LAUNCH JOINT INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS.
- STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL COOPERATION THROUGH INVESTMENTS AND PARTICIPATION IN FINANCING OF CERTAIN PROJECTS IN FIFTH PLAN.

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- ORGANIZING RECRUITMENT OF WORKERS AND STRENGTHEN COOPERATION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING.
- INCREASE COOPERATION IN FIELDS OF LAND, SEA, AND AIR TRANSPORT, AND IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS BY FINANCING AND CARRYING OUT CERTAIN PROJECTS TO THIS END.
- COOPERATION IN FIELD OF ELECTRIC POWER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT COMMISSION TO CARRY OUT PROJECT TO COORDINATE RESOURCES OF TWO COUNTRIES AND TO INITIATE JOINT PROJECTS TO MEET JOINT NEEDS IN THIS FIELD.
- REAFFIRMATION OF ACCORDS SIGNED RECENTLY BY TWO COUNTRIES REGARDING AGRICULTURE AND PASSAGE OF MEASURES TO CARRY OUT THESE ACCORDS.
- DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION IN FIELDS OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, INFORMATION AND FILM PRODUCTION.

4. COMMUNIQUE ALSO NOTES THAT HIGH COMMISSION RECOMMENDED THAT SPECIAL COMMISSIONS MEET AT APPROPRIATE DATES TO STUDY OTHER ASPECTS OF COOPERATION AND TO SUBMIT THEIR FINDINGS TO NEXT MEETING OF HIGH COMMISSION. FINALLY, DOCUMENT CLOSES WITH AFFIRMATION THAT MEETING RESULTED IN "COHERENT AND PRECISE PROGRAM OF COOPERATION WHICH GIVES NEW MOMENTUM (ELAN) TO TUNISIAN-LIBYAN RELATIONS."

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

5. COMMENT: AS FAR AS IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE ANY SENSE
OUT OF THE BOILERPLATE CONTAINED IN THIS COMMUNIQUE, THE
TUNISIANS MAY HAVE GOTTEN MUCH OF WHAT THEY WANTED AS
LIBYA HAS NOW FORMALLY COMMITTED ITSELF TO SUPPORT THE
FIFTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND TO EXPAND TRADE, WHICH TUNISIA
SEES GOING LARGELY TO ITS FAVOR. AS USUAL NO SPECIFIC
COMMITMENTS ARE REPORTED IN THE COMMUNIQUE. ANY FIRM
AGREEMENTS THAT WERE MADE ARE PROBABLY CONTAINED IN THE
AGREED MINUTES AND IN SEPARATE PROTOCOLS, NONE OF WHICH
IS LIKELY TO BE MADE PUBLIC. (MEDIA REPORTS THAT A
PROTOCOL WAS SIGNED AMENDING TRADE AGREEMENT SIGNED
BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN 1972, BUT NO FURTHER DETAILS ARE AVAIL-
ABLE.) WE NOTE THAT NOVIRA IN HIS CLOSING STATEMENTS REFERRED
TO A CUSTOMS EXEMPTION "WHICH GRADUALLY LEADS TO AN INTEGRATED
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ECONOMIC SYSTEM AIMED AT CREATION OF A COMMON MARKET." ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT A NEW IDEA AND TUNISIAN OFFICIALS HAVE SPOKEN OF IT IN PAST, IT IS INTERESTING THAT THERE IS NO REFERENCE TO SUCH PROJECT IN THE COMMUNIQUE.

6. LABIDI'S FINAL STATEMENT WAS ALMOST AS VOID OF SUBSTANCE AS WAS NOUIRA'S BUT IT ABOUNDS IN PRAISE FOR BOURGUIBA AND HIS PRIME MINISTER. IN CLOSING, LABIDI NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE TWO COUNTRIES MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED CERTAIN DIFFICULT MOMENTS IN THE PAST, "THE BASE HAS NOW BEEN LAID FOR RELATIONS BASED ON MUTUAL CONFIDENCE." THIS BASE, HE ADDED, ALSO PERMITS "US TO VIEW THE FUTURE WITH OPTIMISM THANKS TO THE IMPORTANT MEASURES WHICH WILL BE TAKEN JOINTLY AND THANKS TO THE IMPORTANT STEPS WHICH WE WILL HAVE REACHED TOWARDS UNITY." WHILE THIS MAY BE OVERSTATING THE CASE SOMEWHAT, IT IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT THE HIGH COMMISSION MEETING DID CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVOLUTION OF CLOSER TUNISIAN-LIBYAN ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL COOPERATION AND THIS NO DOUBT MEANS A CLOSER POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP AS WELL. WE ARE STILL A LONG WAY FROM ANY NEW JERBA UNITY DECLARATION, HOWEVER, AND PROBABLY IT WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE TO VIEW THIS MEETING AS ANOTHER STEP IN THE ON-GOING PROCESS OF "NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS"-- EVEN THOUGH THE TWO PARTIES MAY HAVE DIFFERENT REASONS FOR SEEKING THIS SAME OBJECTIVE.
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